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NEWS ABOUT FRUIT  
for  
HOME GARDENERS

Twenty-five or fifty years ago, the orchard was a part of every general farm. Today, these orchards have practically disappeared, either from age or lack of care. And, they are not being replaced -- because insect pests and plant diseases require a more intensive spray campaign than the average farmer is able to equipped to do.

Therefore, small fruits have become more popular and desirable. One goal set up for our FSA borrowers this year has been the starting of some small fruits in or near the garden. To help you with this goal, the following information is offered.

PLANTING

Fruits do best on a deep, well-drained soil.

Nursery stock should only be purchased from a reliable firm, and place your order early.

If the land is not ready to receive the stock when it arrives, unpack at once, and heel it in, in a well-drained spot. Set the plants in their permanent location as soon as possible, and before growth starts.

Plants should be set about the same depth, or slightly deeper -- an inch, or so -- depending on the size of the plant --- than they stood in the nursery.

Somewhat more care is necessary when planting strawberries, to be certain that the crown of the plant is even with the surface of the ground, thus leaving the terminal bud, or growing point, just above the surface. Rotting may occur if planted too deep, and the roots may dry out if planted too shallow.

The most practical system of training strawberries in the home garden is the "matted row" -- that is, allowing the runners to fill in the row around the parent plant. Strawberries should be well cultivated the first year. After the first year, mulching with straw, leaves, or other materials of this nature takes the place of cultivation. The mulch is applied to a depth of 3 inches, and protects the plants from the extremes of alternate thawing and freezing, also conserving moisture, and helps to smother weed growth.



During the first spring, the flowers are pinched off the plants to insure a strong runner formation.

### PRUNING BERRIES

Early spring is the best pruning time --- after winter killing is over, and before the sap begins to flow.

Bramble fruits (black raspberries, purple canes, and blackberries) should have the old canes removed just as soon after the crop is harvested as possible. These tend to spread disease to the new shoots --- and they are of no further use. The old canes should be cut off close to the ground, with a brush hook or a pair of long-handled lopping shears.

Black raspberries, purple canes, and blackberries respond to summer pinching of the new shoots. The tip ends of the shoots are pinched off when they have reached a height of 18 to 24 inches, which is usually early in June. When the shoot is pinched back, it stops growing at the end, and the buds on the side push out and form lateral branches. Bushes so treated are lower and more self-supporting.

Red raspberries are not summer pinched, but are cut back to about 4 feet in height in the spring pruning. Red raspberries sucker freely, and sprouts will come up more or less all over the patch. These should be kept confined to a narrow, matted row about 12 or 15 inches wide. The weakest canes should be cut out.

In the spring, the lateral branches on black-caps and purple canes are cut back to 4 or 5 inches, and blackberries twice that length. The weak, spindling canes, are cut out entirely.

Two and three-year-old wood is the best fruiting wood on currants and gooseberries. In pruning, therefore, the weakest of the young shoots and all branches older than four years are cut out at the ground.

NOTE: For best results with cane berries, plant red raspberries some distance from the other cane fruits, and preferably in another location. Red raspberries carry mosaic; although, it is not visible --- and this disease will destroy the other cane fruits.

### PRUNING GRAPES

There is more ~~confusion~~<sup>confusion</sup> about this spring job, but the following information may be helpful.

At planting time, the vine is cut to 2 buds and the shoots growing from this tied to a stake. At the end of the first season, the best of these canes is again cut to 2 buds. The strongest and straightest of the canes is saved to form the trunk, at the



end of the second season. By the end of the third season, many canes will have formed along this trunk, and it is time to tie the trunk to a trellis, and begin a definite system of training. The Kniffin system is the best known; it's the most simple and does not require summer tying.

The trellis used has 2 wires (usually No. 9 or No. 10 size) one  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 feet, and the other 5 feet from the ground. The posts are 8 feet long, set 3 feet in the ground and 25 feet apart with 3 vines between every 2 posts. Some rot resistant wood, such as locust, should be used, and the end posts should be well-braced.

At the end of the 3rd season, the vine with the single stem and its lateral canes is ready to put on the trellis. The cane left for the trunk should reach the top wire. Cut it off at this height and tie in an upright position to the two wires. Cut away all growth, except 2 canes originating at each wire. The four remaining canes are cut back thus: the two on top are cut to 5 buds each, and the 2 at the lower wire to 5 buds. Fewer buds should be left, if the vine does not have a vigorous growth. The stem or trunk is tied to the upper and lower wires, and the 4 canes are tied along the 2 wires to right and left of the trunk with heavy string or binder twine.

After the third season, 4 spurs of 2 buds each are left. From these buds come the canes which will be tied at the end of the 5th season, leaving 30 or more buds and 4 renewal spurs to each vine, and cutting off all other growth. The spurring provides the strong fruiting canes from the two-year-old wood,

For your convenience, the following are listed as sources of nursery stock for this area because of their location:

Kelly Brothers Nursery, -- Dansville, New York  
Maloney's Nursery Company -- Dansville, New York  
Stern's -- Geneva, New York

Your farm magazines also advertise other Nursery Companies, and you may already have favorite sources of small fruit plants.

NOTE: The material for this article was written from information obtained in: Cornell Extension Bulletin -- 421 .....

Title: GROWING FRUIT FOR THE HOME

Sincerely yours,

*Marian F. Owen*

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HM Supervisor

